

EUROPEAN JEWRY JUST BEFORE THE HOLOCAUST

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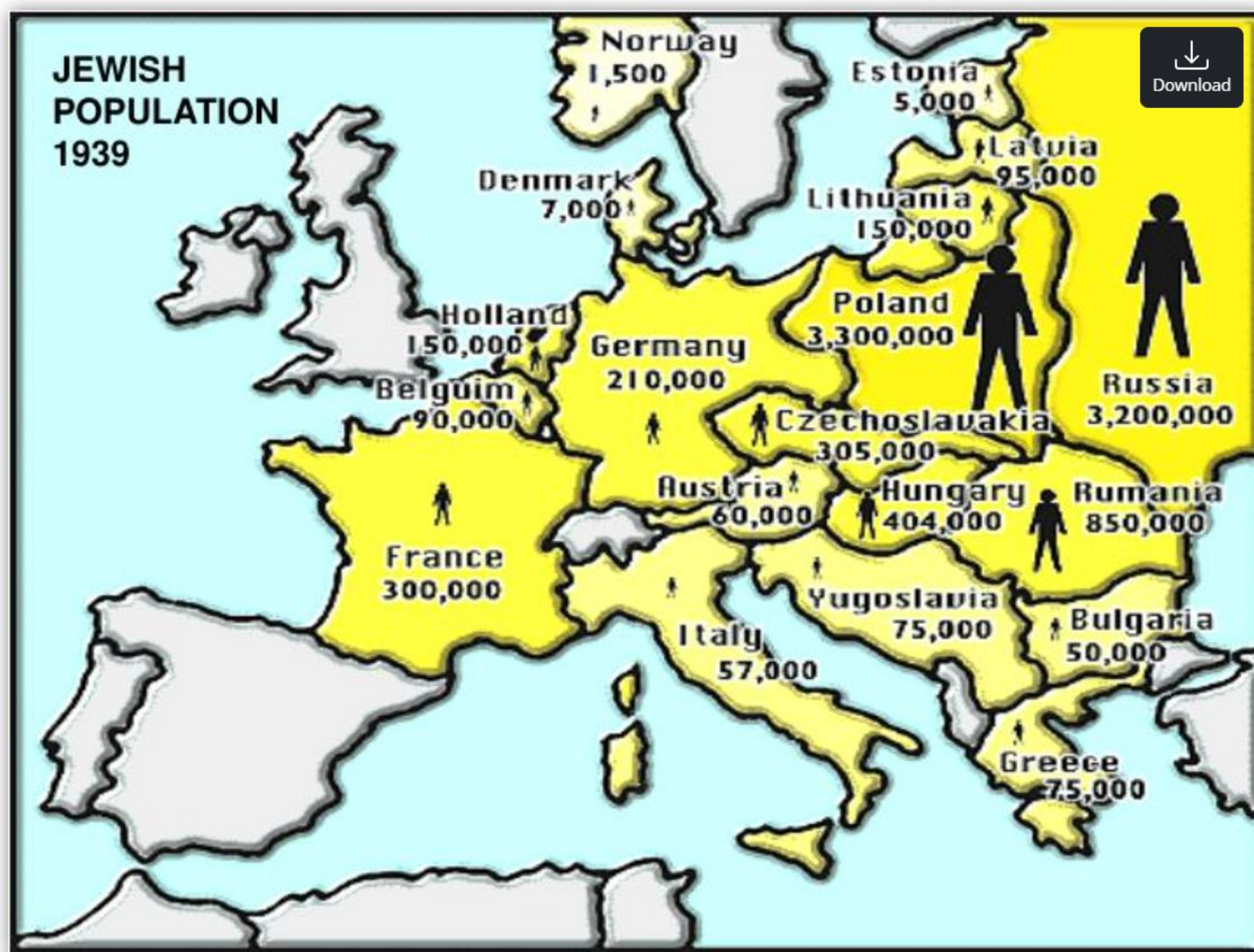
I. A PRESENCE THROUGHOUT EUROPE
JEWS LIVED IN ALMOST EVERY COUNTRY IN EUROPE,
ESPECIALLY IN EASTERN EUROPE. GERMANY WAS
HOME TO ONLY A SMALL JEWISH MINORITY.

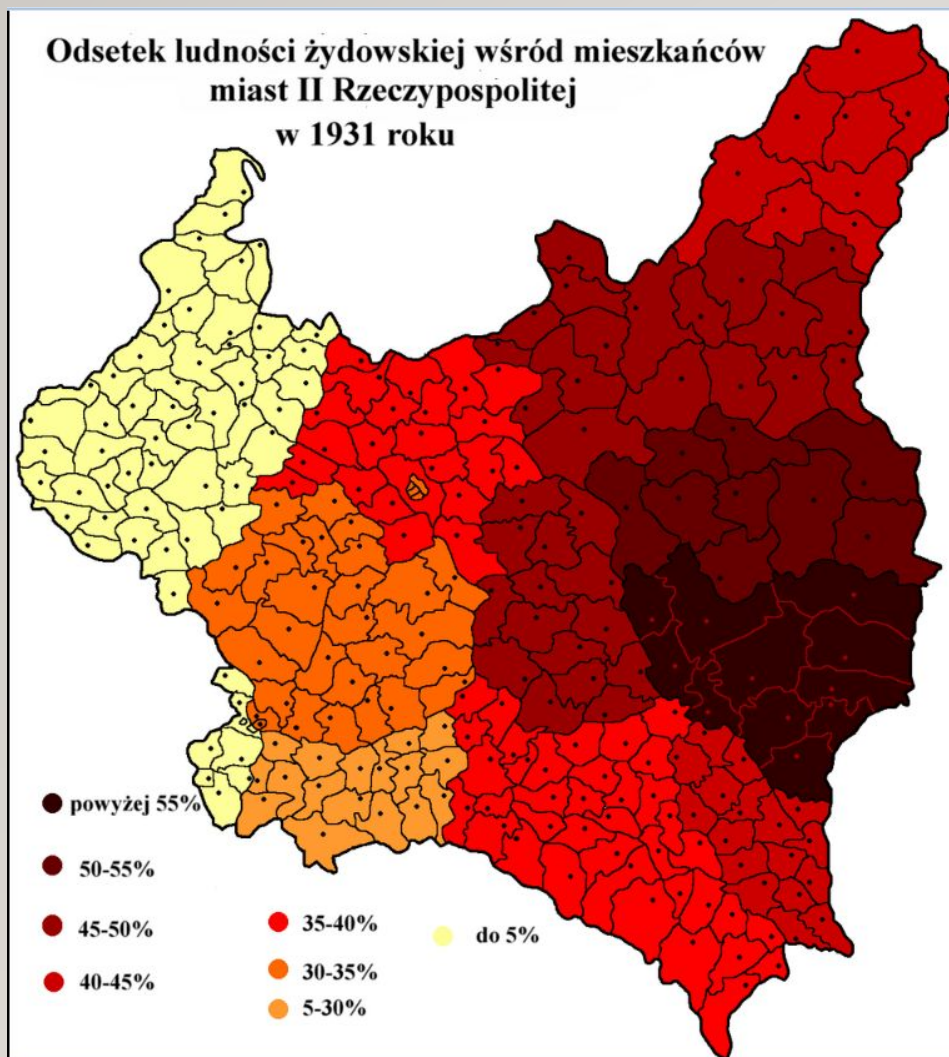


Before the Holocaust, Jews had lived for centuries in almost every country in Europe, with a particularly high concentration in **Eastern Europe**. Contrary to popular belief, Germany did not have the largest Jewish population: in Germany, Jews represented a **very small minority**, less than 1% of the population.

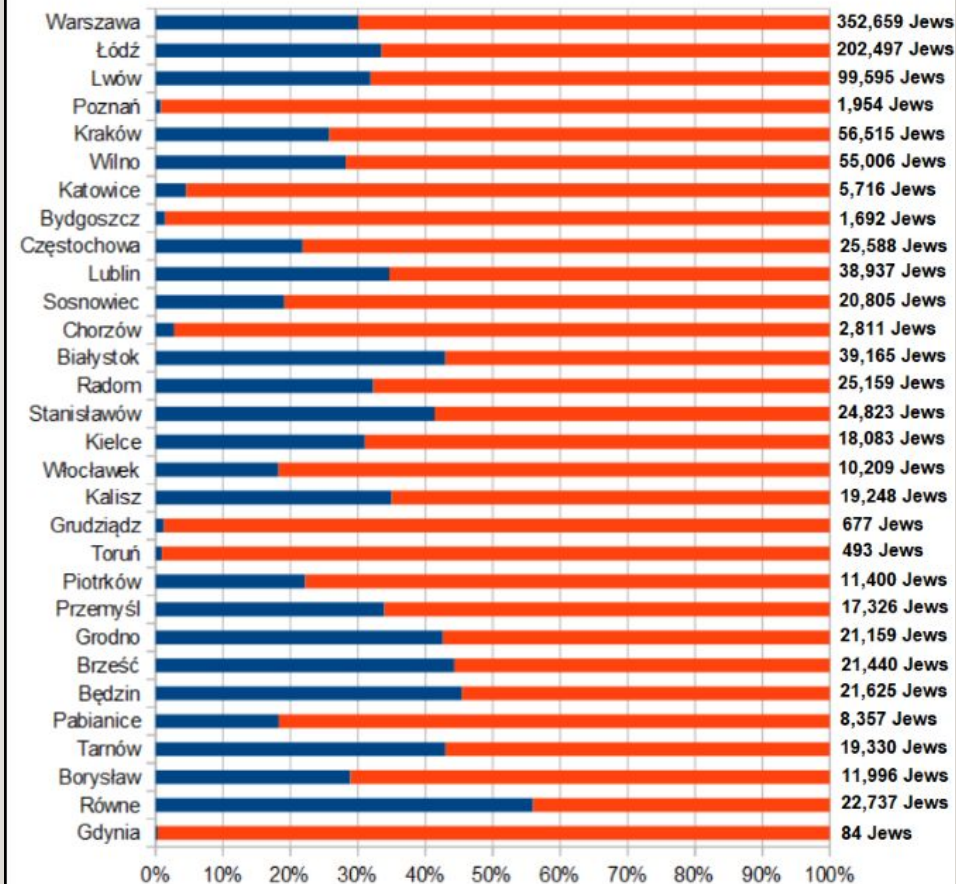
The main communities were in **Poland, Russia/Soviet Union, Romania and Hungary**.







Jewish population of Poland's largest cities in 1931



In total there were 1,157,086 Jews in Poland's largest 30 cities according to the 1931 census, it was over 37% of Poland's 3,113,933 Jews.

Percentage of the Jewish population in the cities of Poland in 1931

2. A GREAT DIVERSITY OF LIFESTYLES
BETWEEN THE SHTETLS OF EASTERN EUROPE AND
THE ASSIMILATED URBAN ENVIRONMENTS OF
WESTERN EUROPE, THERE WAS NO SINGLE WAY TO
BE JEWISH.



European Jewish life was far from uniform. In **Eastern Europe**, many Jews lived in **shtetls**, small towns or villages with a Jewish majority, where life was organized around family, religion and community. **Yiddish** occupied an important place, as did a culture of its own, made up of newspapers, books, theater and traditions.





Jews of Sanok (Poland, 1936)



Boys at a Talmud Torah school in Kolbuszowa, Poland, 1933.

European Jewish life was far from uniform, many Jews were also at the forefront of modernity in all fields, artistic, scientific or cultural, from Poland to the Balkans





Girls in a Jewish secondary school in Warsaw, Poland, 1937.



Jewish schoolgirls from Szczuczyn in Polish folk costumes



DUBROVNIK

1935

Here I am wearing a traditional dress that the women of Dubrovnik would wear. I was born in Rijeka in 1914, then moved to Vinkovci where I grew up and went to school. I loved photography and worked for the Ercegovic family in Dubrovnik. I didn't know it when I started working for them, but the Ercegovic family would save many Jewish lives during the war.



**In the partisans
1942**



A group of Jewish boy scouts in Salónica, Greece, late 1920s.

In **Western Europe**, Jews were often more **assimilated** into the national culture: they spoke the language of the country and participated fully in urban, intellectual and professional life, even though the majority of Jews from Eastern Europe were of very modest means.





A Jewish boys' football team in Berlin, Germany, 1935.

3.A CONTRASTING SOCIAL REALITY

JEWS WORKED IN ALL TYPES OF PROFESSIONS. SOME WERE WELL-OFF, BUT MANY WERE POOR. THE MYTH OF THE "RICH JEW" IS FALSE.

IN WESTERN EUROPE TOO, ALONGSIDE A SO-CALLED JEWISH ELITE, THE MAJORITY OF JEWS WERE OF IMMIGRANT ORIGIN, FROM EASTERN EUROPE, AND THEREFORE RATHER OF MODEST CONDITIONS.



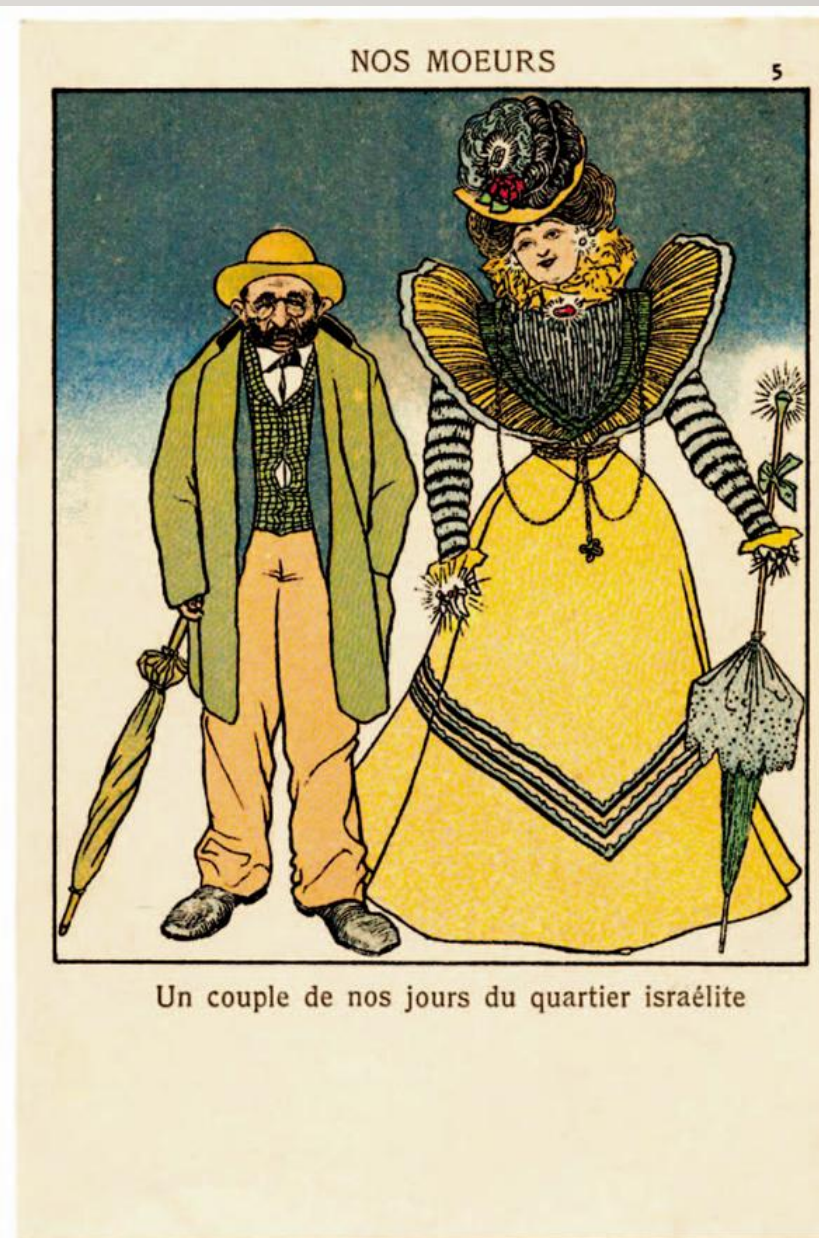


Рис. Л. Злотникова.



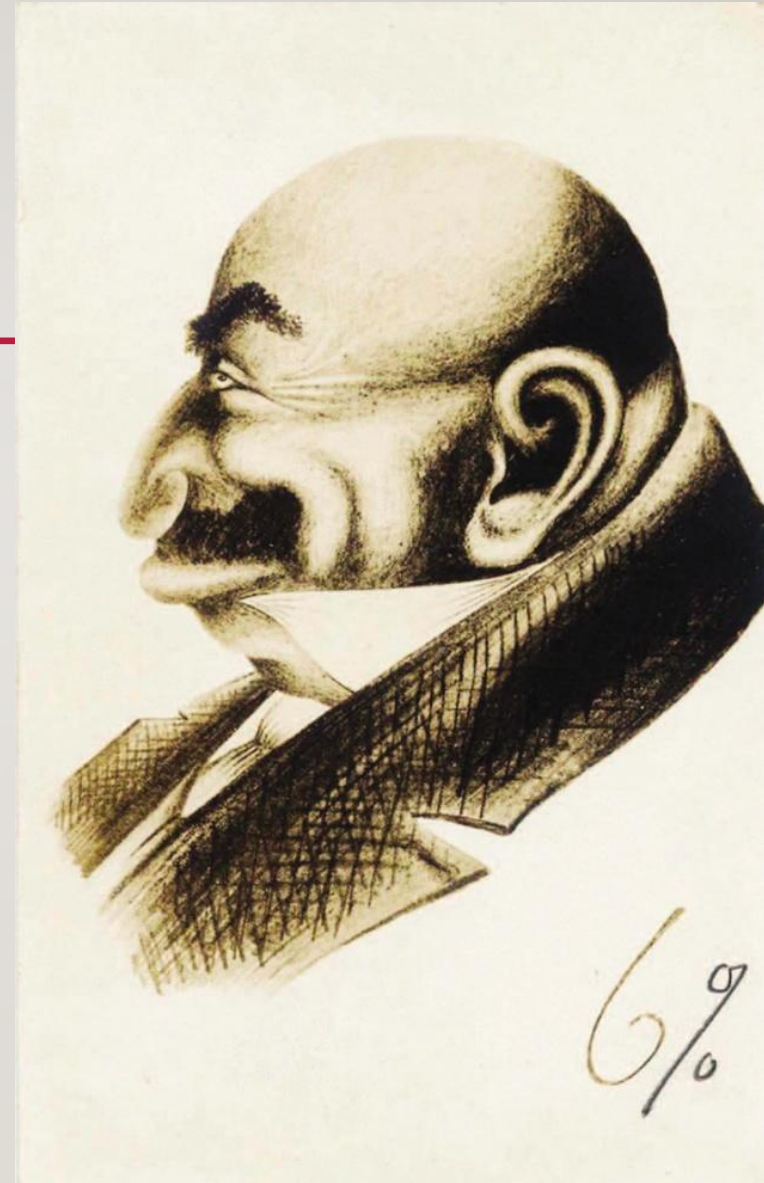
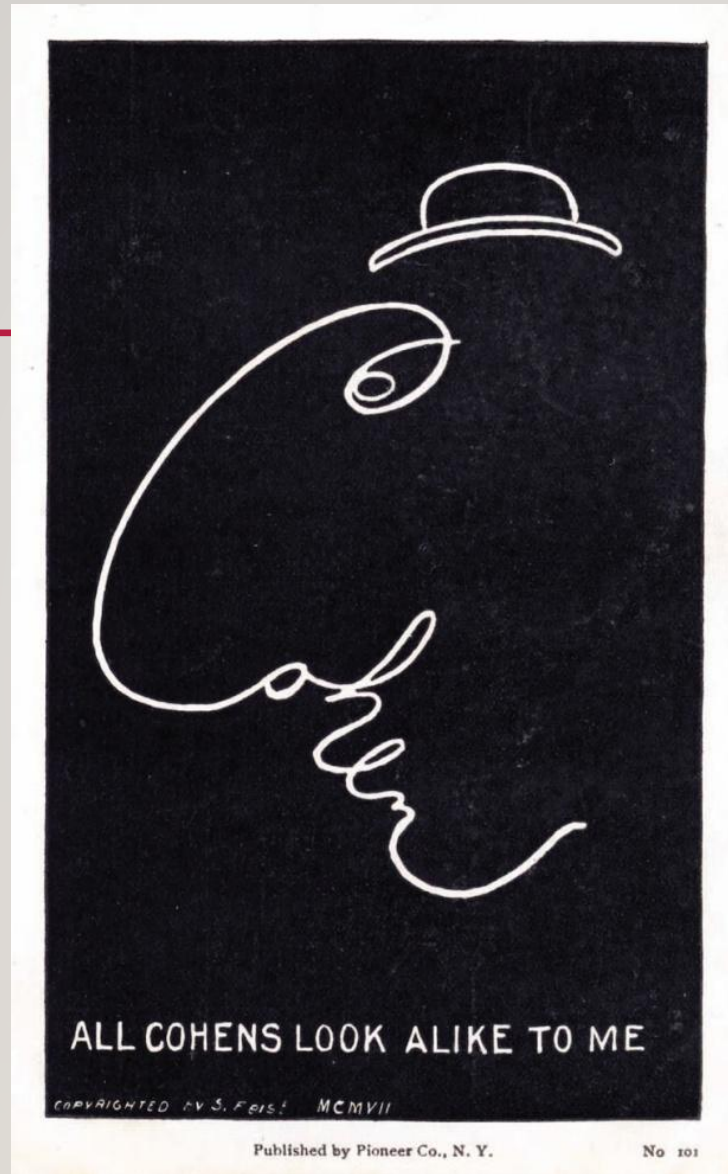
Л. Злотникова

Баронесса Ротшильд.



Типы
курсистъ.
Акушерка

THE NOSE
REFLECTS THE
EXORBITANT
INTEREST RATES
OF THE JEWS —
THE OLD
ACCUSATION OF
THE JEWISH
USURER.



THE REALITY: THE POOR IMMIGRANT!



THE POOR AND FILTHY JEW...



JEWISH HUMOR

- is a poor man's humour

Socially, Jews belonged to **all walks of life**. It is completely wrong to believe that they were wealthy or business owners. They were found in all trades: craftsmen, workers, shopkeepers, farmers, teachers, doctors, accountants, seamstresses or small entrepreneurs. Traditional Jewish occupations, including in Western Europe: tailors, cobblers, furriers, horse dealers, tavern keepers, small merchants, peddlers and, even, farmers.





Paysans récoltants des pommes de terre, Peresetchina
Bessarabie, Roumanie © ORT France

**JEWISH VENDORS SELL THEIR WARES AT AN
OUTDOOR MARKET IN FRONT OF THE STARA
SYNAGOGUE. KRAKOW, POLAND, 1936**



**STREET SCENE IN THE JEWISH QUARTER OF
PARIS BEFORE THE WAR. PARIS, FRANCE,
1933-1939**



While some families were well-off, the majority lived **modestly, even in poverty**. This social diversity is essential to understanding the large number of Jews within the socialist and Marxist movements.



**4. THE JEWS WERE DEEPLY DIVIDED POLITICALLY:
DIVIDED BETWEEN COMMUNISTS, BUNDISTS,
RELIGIOUS, ASSIMILATIONISTS AND ZIONISTS.**







Executive Committee of the Warsaw Garment Workers' Union, 1917. Displayed in the back are portraits of Vladimir Medem and Karl Marx.



Des organisations juives durant la Fête du Travail, à Petrograd, en Russie, en 1919. (Crédit : Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center/via JTA)



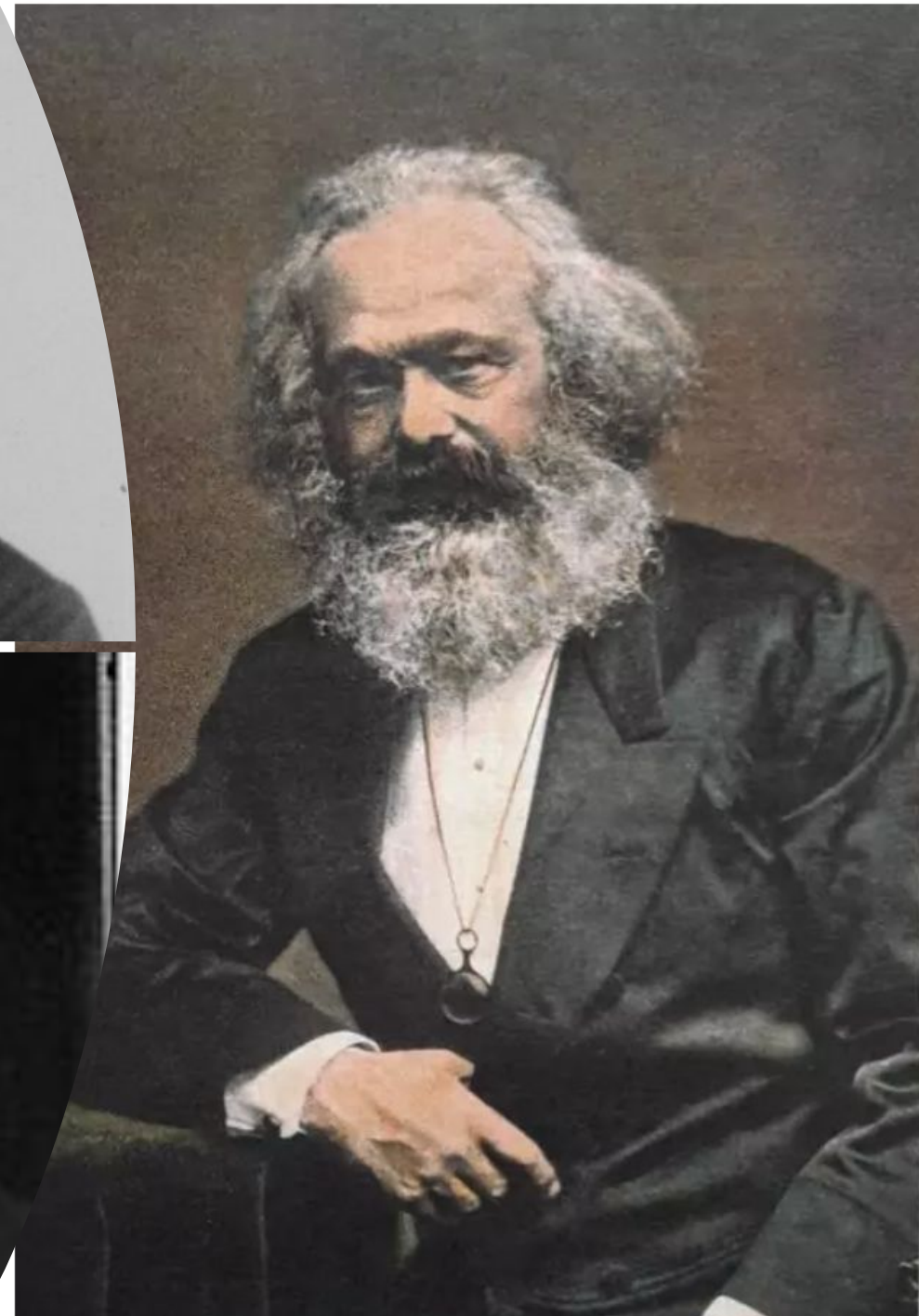
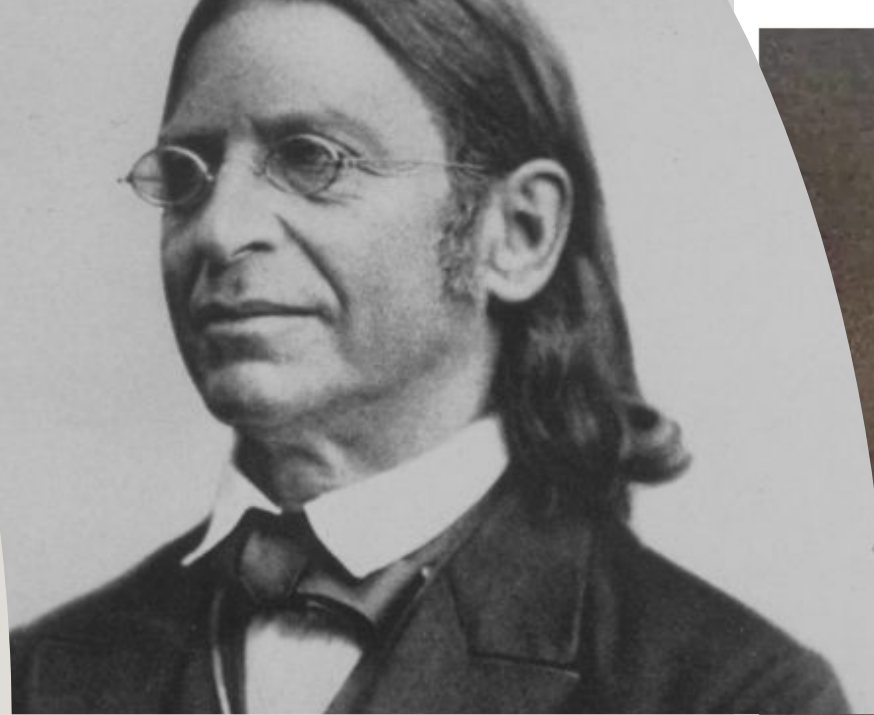
**Jewish Workers' Bund
general poster in Yiddish
and Polish, "The Masses of
Jewish Workers Will Defeat
the Front," the front
referring to Zionists,
capitalists, communists, and
Orthodox Jews, 1930s**



IN TERNATIONALISTE: L. L. Zamenhof, creator of Esperanto

ZIONISTS: INFLUENTIAL BUT MINORITY

- Louis Montagu, 2nd Baron Swaythling
- He opposed the Balfour Declaration. In 1917, along with Lionel Nathan de Rothschild, Sir Philip Magnus, and other prominent British Jews, he co-founded the Anti-Zionist League of British Jews. He was president of the Federation of Synagogues until 1925.
- Abraham Geiger
- Marx



5. A VERY RICH CULTURAL LIFE

**YIDDISH LANGUAGE, THEATRE, PRESS, MUSIC,
LITERATURE, ARTS: JEWISH CULTURE WAS ALIVE,
CREATIVE AND PROFOUNDLY EUROPEAN.**



Jews also played an important role in the **cultural and civic life** of Europe. They contributed to literature, music, theatre, film, thought and science. Figures such as **Franz Kafka, Marc Chagall** and **Arnold Schoenberg** bear witness to this cultural vitality. In many cities such as **Warsaw** or **Vienna**, Jewish culture was intense, multilingual and open to the world.





Stefan Zweig Albert Einstein Sigmund Freud Sarah Bernhardt Arthur Rubinstein Marc Chagall
Walther Rathenau Franz Kafka Amedeo Modigliani Franz Kafka Walther Rathenau Henri Bergson



6. MULTIPLE IDENTITIES

**JEWES WERE OFTEN ATTACHED TO THEIR
JEWISHNESS WHILE BEING PATRIOTIC.
THEY PARTICIPATED FULLY IN THE CIVIC
LIFE OF THEIR COUNTRY.**





Jewish representatives in the Sejm (parliament): Religious and secular

(1) Rabbi Moszek Eli Halpern, (2) Noah Pryłucki, (3) Avraham Tsevi Perlmutter^[16], (4) Dr. Berek Wajncier, (5) Yitshak Grünbaum, (6) Osjasz Thon, (7) Uri (Jerzy) Rosenblatt, (8) (en)Ignacy Schiper (vers 1920).

During the four years of war, more than 1.5 million Jews were mobilized, including 500,000 Russians.

More than 36,000 Jews out of 180,000 Jews in France and Algeria out of a population of 39 million, 96,000 Jews out of 480,000 German Jews out of a population of 65 million, 50,000 Jews out of 270,000 British Jews out of a population of 46 million.

From 1917, 250,000 American Jews joined the conflict.

Not to mention the 20,000 Jews who volunteered for the British forces.





A group of French Jewish soldiers from Algeria belonging to a regiment of Zouaves
(Champagne 1916)







Jewish officers of the army of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, prisoners of war in the Osnabrück camp, in front of the "Jewish" barrack (1943)

As the Yizkor book recounts, while Poles may have questioned the role that Jews would play in their new state, that did not exempt Jews for being drafted into the army to fight for Poland. In 1919 and 1920, Jewish men born from 1896-1900, “went off to serve in the Polish military, and sent to the front.” (*Sefer Zambrow, p. 52*).



Zambrow Yizkor book photo depicting Jewish soldiers from Zambrow serving in the Polish army.



Rabbi Baruch Steinberg before Warsaw Great Synagogue (1933), reading roll call of the fallen, organized by Union of Jewish Fighters for Polish Independence



Synagonistis: Greek Jews in the National Resistance

Mordechai Frizis



Mordechai Frizis as a Captain

Native name	Μαρδοχαΐος Φριζής
Born	1 January 1893 Chalcis, Kingdom of Greece
Died	5 December 1940 (aged 47)

He fought in World War I on the Macedonian front. Died in combat in 1940

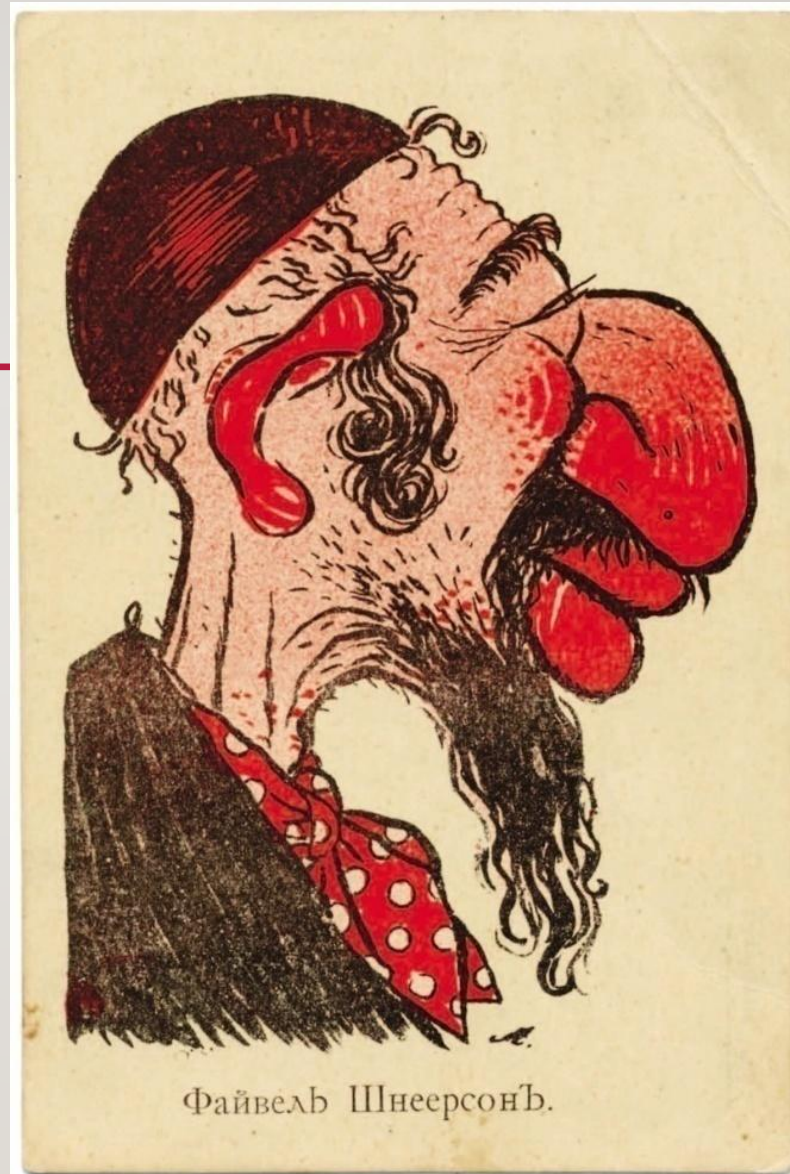
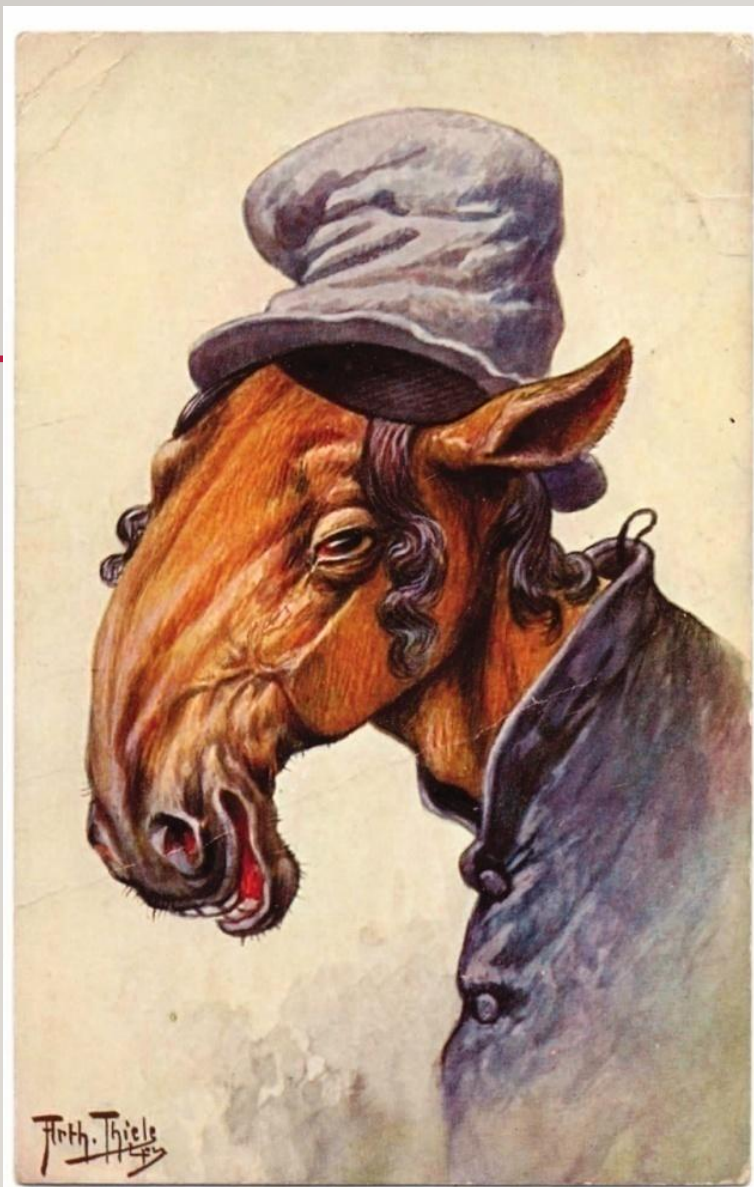
7. REAL INTEGRATION, BUT VERY FRAGILE

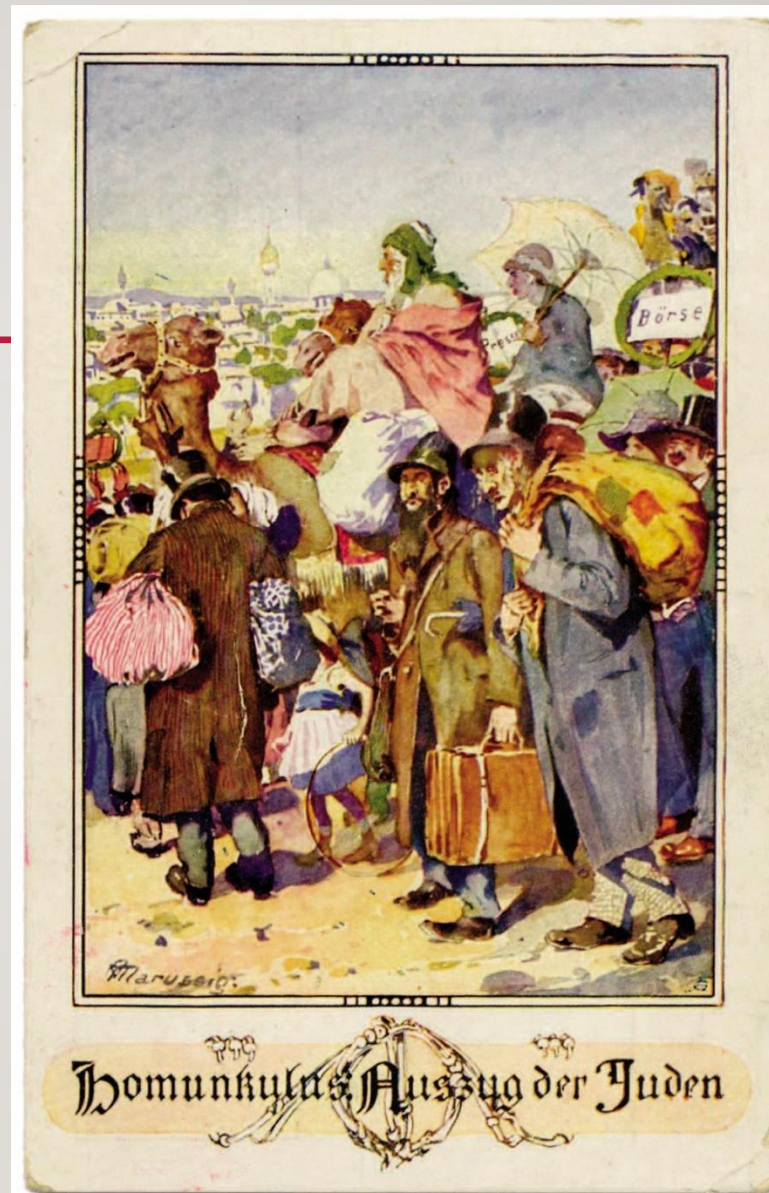
DESPITE EMANCIPATION AND CITIZENSHIP,
ANTI-SEMITISM PERSISTED. ESPECIALLY IN CENTRAL
AND EASTERN EUROPE.



Jewish identity before the Holocaust was therefore **multiple and complex**. Many Jews felt both deeply Jewish and fully German, Polish, French, Dutch, or Belgian. They voted, served in the armed forces, participated in political life and national culture. Yet, despite this often real integration, they were still frequently perceived as **"others"**, victims of **anti-Semitism**, social discrimination and sometimes violence.







THE UNBEARABLE JEWISH SUCCESS STORY



1938: Polish plan to deport Jews to Madagascar!

On 20 September, as Hitler was preparing the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, the Polish government draft a law on (forced!) emigration, intended to be submitted to the Diet (the Polish parliament), of which under the terms of this draft, **the Council of Ministers would each year draw up a list of fifty to one hundred thousand Jews who would be compelled to leave the country within the year. (...) The financing of this entire procedure would be borne by the Jews of Poland and abroad."**



Demonstration by Polish students, members of the National Radical Camp, demanding the establishment of ghetto benches for Jewish students at the Lwow Polytechnic (Lviv), 1930s

MIEJSCE
w ławkach
nie parzystych

Uniwersytecka w Warszawie
Wolno książkę pożyczać

16 GRUD 1937

UNIwersYTET WARSZAWSKI

WYKAZ
WYKŁADÓW I ĆWICZEŃ

Numer albumu 46484

Stud. Wydz. Lekarskiego
Szapiro Marek
rodem z Warszawy

Immatrykulowan y dn. 26 8, 1934 r.
pod poz. 1358

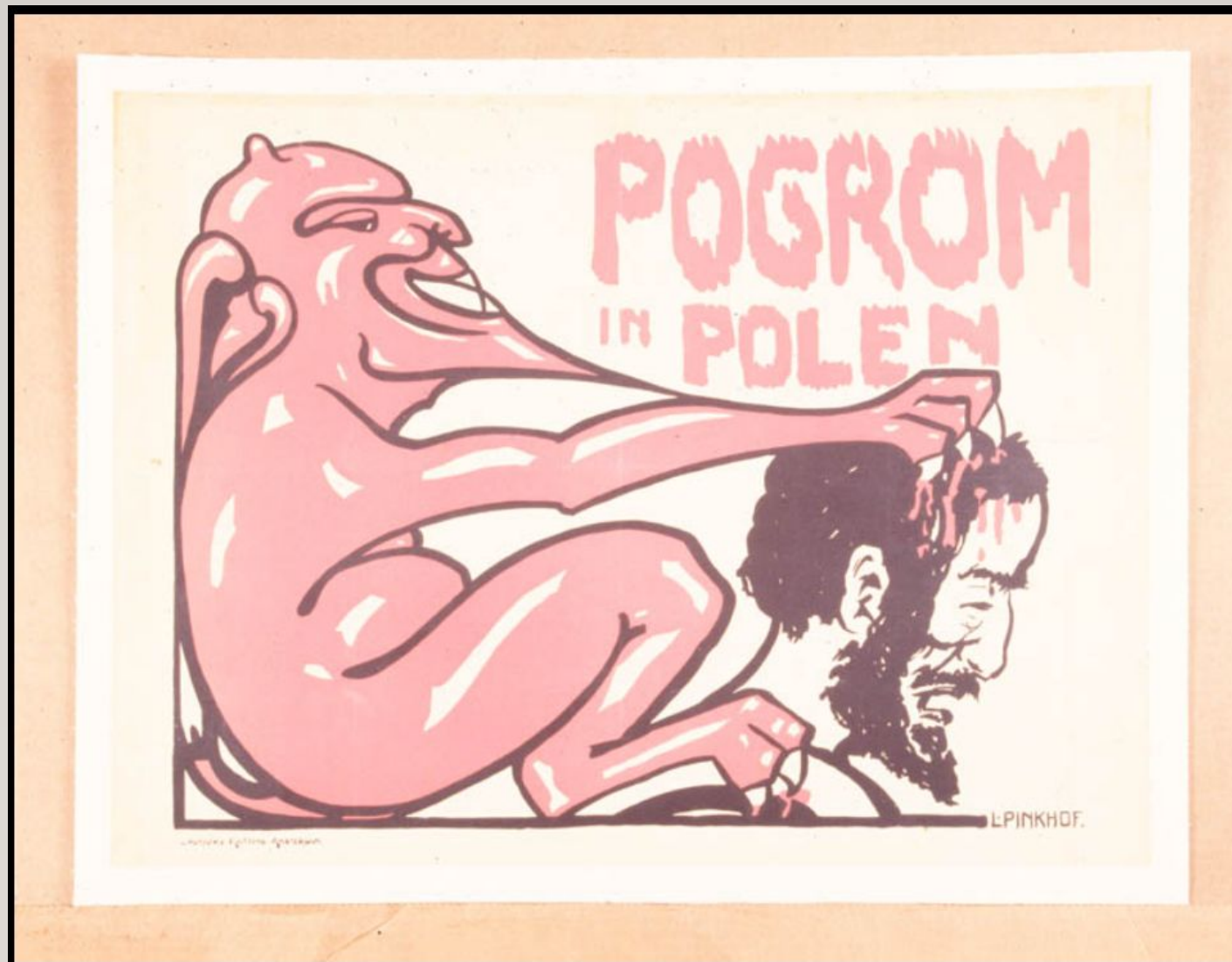
Podpis własnoręczny
Marek Szapiro

Warszawa, dn. 26 PAZ. 1934

193 r.

Wzór Nr. 21.
dotwowa Nr. 65420. 1.8.33. 200 i 12.

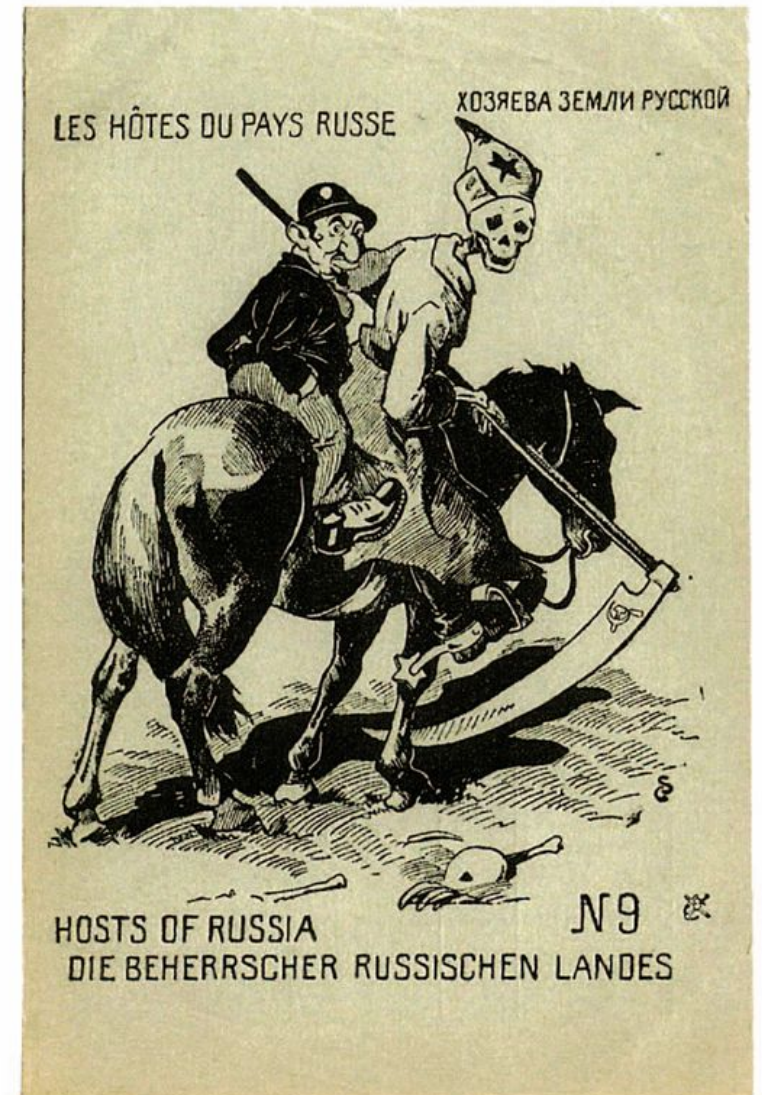
Student's book (*indeks*) of Jewish medical student Marek Szapiro at Warsaw University, with rectangular "ghetto benches" ("odd-numbered-benches") stamp



Poster alerting people to a recent Pogrom in Poland Artist: L. Pinkhof, Medium: color lithograph
Date: Amsterdam, early 20th century



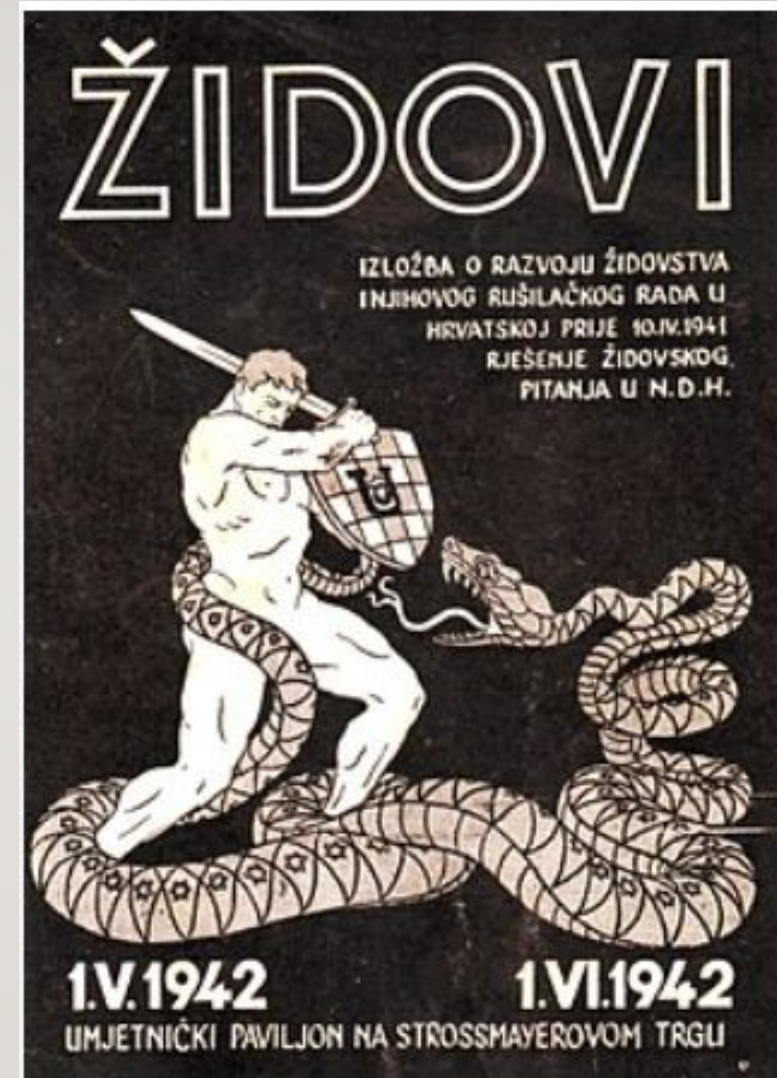
JUDEO-BOLSHEVISM



Antisemitic protests



Propaganda photograph showing men and women participating in a antisemitic demonstration in Osijek on August 1, 1941, carrying a banner with the slogan "We demand forced labour for the guilty ones – the Jews!" Photo courtesy of the Croatian State Archives.



Propaganda photograph showing men and women participating in a antisemitic demonstration in Osijek on August 1, 1941, carrying a banner with the slogan "We demand forced labour for the guilty ones – the Jews!"

8.THE HOLOCAUST HAS TOTALLY CHANGED THE WAY JEWS LOOK AT RELIGION,THE NATION EXILE,WIDELY IMPOSED SILENCE AND RESILIENCE

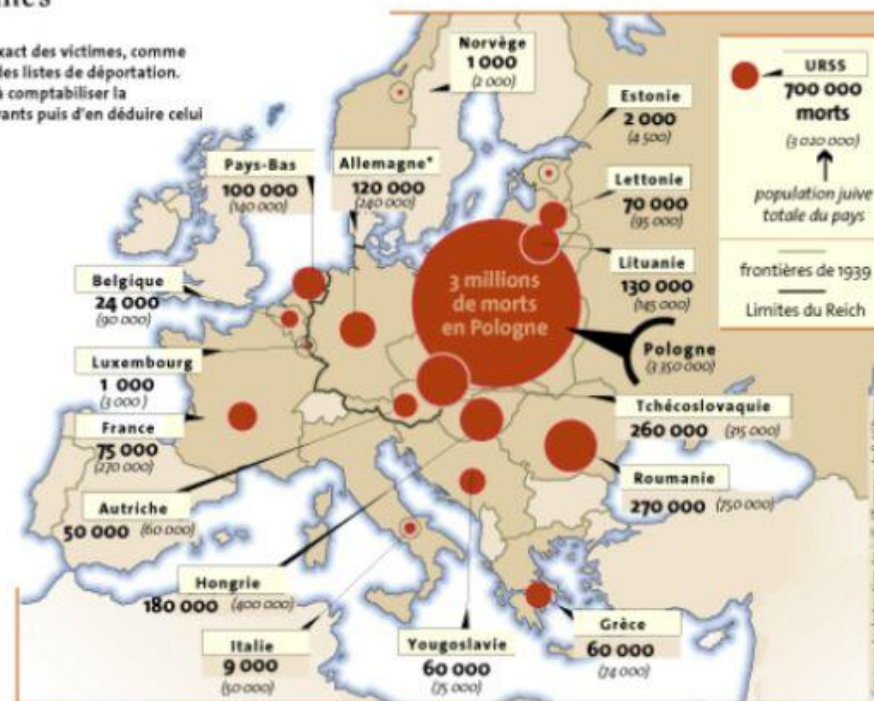
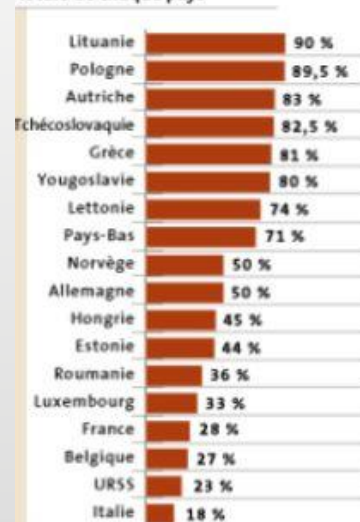
AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF COMMUNIST AND BUNDIST UTOPIAS,
JEWISH IDENTITY WAS REBUILT AROUND THE CENTRALITY OF
ISRAEL.THE JEWS HAVE DISAPPEARED FROM EUROPE.



5,1 millions de juifs exterminés

Seuls certains pays disposent d'un dénombrement exact des victimes, comme la France et la Belgique, pour lesquelles on possède des listes de déportation. La méthode la plus communément utilisée consiste à comptabiliser la population juive avant guerre et le nombre de survivants puis d'en déduire celui des disparus.

Victimes, en % de la population juive totale de chaque pays



* Dans le cas de l'Allemagne, parmi les 98 000 juifs qui ont émigré à partir de 1933 dans toute l'Europe, 75 000 allaient mourir. Ce sont donc environ 200 000 juifs allemands qui

In reality, in a context of hegemonic anti-fascist and patriotic memory erected as early as 1944, the Shoah, that is to say the specific fate of the Jews, was very quickly obscured. Europe's time was one of oblivion, of silence about the Shoah. The time of the Jews was just as much a time of silence, but largely constrained. It was not a time for victimization, nor for the slightest demands, but rather for resignation, resilience, and reconstruction. The memory of the Holocaust emerged very slowly and belatedly, including in Israel until the Eichmann trial.





1946: Kielce pogrom

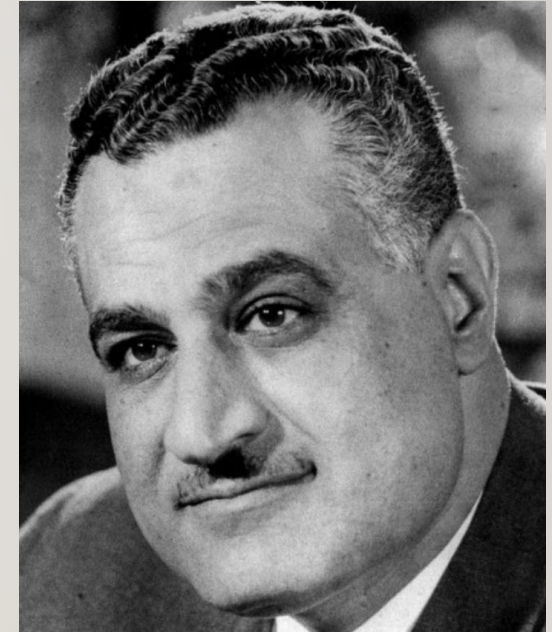
Slansky trial in Prague
(1952), anti-Semitic purges
in Poland (1968)



Rudolf Slánský avait lui-même dénoncé les déviations « opportunistes et les nationalistes » au sein du parti et fait arrêter certains de ses futurs coaccusés, avant d'être lui-même happé par la machine à tuer.

AP/SIPA

IN CONCLUSION: ZIONISM IMPOSED ITSELF ON THE
JEWSS
THREE "FATHERS" OF ISRAEL



Gamal Abdel Nasser